

## Message Text

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12

ACTION ARA-20

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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6521

INFO USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 3619

USCINCSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, AR

SUBJ: POLITICAL PARTY ROUNDUP

1. SUMMARY: BALBIN SEEMS SURE TO BE RE-ELECTED AS UCR LEADER WHEN NATIONAL COMMITTEE CONVENES DURING NEXT FEW WEEKS. PARTIDO REVOLUCIONARIA CRISTIANO (PRC) AND PARTIDO POPULAR CRISTIANO (PPC) HAVE INITIATED TALKS WHICH MAY EVENTUALLY LEAD TO RECONSTITUTION OF A SINGLE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY. FRANCISCO MANRIQUES CLOC IN THE CONGRESS HAS COMPLETELY FALLEN APART AND HIS OWN STAR CONTINUES TO WANE. END SUMMARY.

2. UCR. ALL PROVINCIAL ORGANIZATIONS OF THE UCR HAVE NOW COMPLETED THE PROCESS OF ELECTING DELEGATES TO THE NEW NATIONAL COMMITTEE. PARTY LEADER RICARDO BABINS DELEGATES DID MUCH BETTER THAN EXPECTED, WHILE DELEGATES REPRESENTING CHALLENGER RAUL ALFONSIN LOST IN AT LEAST TWO PROVINCES WHERE THEY HAD BEEN CONFIDENT OF VICTORY. THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE WILL CONVENE THE END OF MAY OR FIRST PART OF JUNE IN ORDER TO ELECT PARTY LEADERS. EVEN ALFONSINISTAS WITH WHOM EMBOFFS HAVE SPOKEN ADMIT THAT BALBIN SEEMS VERY CLOSE TO HAVING TWO THIRDS OF THE DELEGATES NECESSARY FOR  
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RE-ELECTION (PARTY RULES REQUIRE TWO THIRDS VOTE IN NATIONAL

COMMITTEE FOR RE-ELECTION OF INCUMBENT, WHILE CHALLENGER NEEDS ONLY A MAJORITY). UNCOMMITTED DELEGATES FROM TWO PROVINCES HAVE NOT YET DEFINED THEMSELVES, BUT SINCE IT IS CLEAR THAT ALFONSIN HAS NO CHANCE OF GAINING A MAJORITY (EVEN WITH THEIR VOTES) THEY ARE EXPECTED TO LINE UP WITH BALBIN--AFTER SUITABLE NEGOTIATIONS. BALBIN'S CONTINUED LEADERSHIP OF UCR THUS APPEARS TO BE ASSURED. BALBINISTAS ARE EXULTANT AND SAY MARGIN OF VICTORY IN MOST PROVINCES CONFIRMS POPULARITY AND VALIDITY OF BALBIN'S "LOYAL OPPOSITION" POSTURE--A POSTURE WHICH BALBIN WILL BE ABLE TO MAINTAIN WITH INCREASED CONFIDENCE IF AS SEEMS LIKELY THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE RETURNS HIM AS LEADER.

3. CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS. MEMBERS OF BOTH THE PRC AND PPC HAVE BEEN TELLING EMBASSIES FOR SOME TIME OF CONTACTS AND TALKS BETWEEN THE TWO PARTIES AIMED AT BRINGING THEM CLOSER TOGETHER, EVENTUALLY POSSIBLY EVEN TO THE RECONSTITUTION OF A SINGLE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY. FOUR FORMAL--THOUGH PRIVATE--TALKS HAVE NOW BEEN HELD AND A NUMBER OF EMBASSY CONTACTS ARE OPTIMISTIC OVER PROSPECTS FOR BRINGING ABOUT A HIGH DEGREE OF COOPERATION BETWEEN THE TWO PARTIES. THIS IS POSSIBLE. WHILE AT ONE POINT THE PPC WAS IN FREJULI, THE PERONIST-LED COALITION, AT THE SAME TIME THAT THE PRC WAS OFF ON A WIDELY DIVERGENT TANGENT IN THE POPULAR ALLIANCE (AP) WITH ALLENDE INTRANSIGENTS AND THE COMMUNISTS, THE GAP BETWEEN THEM HAS NOW NARROWED. THOUGH THE PRC HAS NOT FORMALLY ENTERED FREJULI, IT HAS FOR ALL PRACTICAL PURPOSES BROKEN WITH ITS FORMER ALLIES IN THE AP AND ADOPTED A POSTURE OF CLOSE COOPERATION WITH FREJULI, OF WHICH THE PPC IS A MEMBER. WHILE CLOSER TIES AND MORE CLOSELY COORDINATED POSITION BETWEEN THE TWO ARE PROBABLY NOW ACHIEVABLE, COMPLETE REINTEGRATION SEEMS UNLIKELY. THE REASONS FOR THIS ARE ALMOST ENTIRELY PERSONAL. AS PROVISIONAL PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE, JOSE ANTONIO ALLENDE (PPC) HAS ACHIEVED A PREEMINENT POSITION; HENCE, HORACIO SUELDO (PRC) WOULD BE FORCED TO TAKE A BACK SEAT TO HIM IF THE TWO PARTIES MERGED AND THIS HE IS UNWILLING TO DO. SOONER OR LATER, HOWEVER, MERGE WILL PROBABLY COME ABOUT. BOTH SIDES UNDERSTAND THAT AS A UNITED PARTY, THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS MIGHT HAVE SOME WEIGHT. SEPARATELY, AS THE PRC AND PPC, THEY COUNT FOR LITTLE.

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4. MANRIQUE. FRANCISCO MANRIQUE'S POSITION CONTINUES TO WEAKEN. IN APRIL HE ANNOUNCED THE ORGANIZATION OF A NEW PARTY, THE FEDERAL PARTY. THIS WAS DESIGNED TO APPEAL TO THE PROVINCES--AS OPPOSED TO BUENOS AIRES--BUT SO FAR ELEMENTS IN THE PROVINCES HAVE SHOWED LITTLE INTEREST IN MANRIQUE'S NEW CREATION. MEANWHILE, HIS BLOC IN THE CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES, THE FEDERALIST POPULAR ALLIANCE (AFP),

HAS COMPLETELY FALLEN APART. IT NOW HAS ONE REMAINING  
MEMBER, GUILLERMO FERNANDEZ GILL.

5. PERONISTS. THE OFT-ANNOUNCED AND POSTPONED JUSTICIALISTA  
PARTY CONGRESS IS NOW SCHEDULED TO BE HELD ON MAY 24  
ACCORDING TO THE PERONIST DAILY MAYORIA. THE CONGRESS' MAIN  
BUSINESS WILL BE TO ELECT A NEW SECOND VICE PRESIDENT AND  
SECRETARY GENERAL.  
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